

**Chaminade University
EN 303/403, Poetry Writing
Fall Day Semester, 2008**

Syllabus

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Course website: <http://www.edwebs.com/cham/303/08FallDay/index.lasso>

Course Description

This course in poetry writing examines the techniques of contemporary poetry and provides practice in writing original poems as well as analytical essays about poetry. The course provides opportunity for students to explore their motives for creative writing and to "try on" a variety of approaches.

Throughout the course, writing projects are submitted via WebCT and are thereby available for discussion by the entire class. Background reading is required from the various texts. The course itself is conducted as a workshop, with student writing frequently at the center of discussion.

The objectives of this course cover the general scope of poetry writing from the point of view of the author. By the end of the course the student should have:

- * An increased understanding of what motivates people to write poetry
- * An increased knowledge of key terminology associated with the writing of poetry
- * An increased awareness of the writing considered to be a part of any poet's basic knowledge
- * A clear understanding of various ways of developing poems
- * An understanding of how to initiate poetic ideas
- * Knowledge of the difference between good and bad poetry
- * An increased awareness of major poetic genres
- * A general knowledge of the market for poetry and creative writing generally

Texts

Addonizio and Laux, *The Poet's Companion*
Stafford, *You Must Revise Your Life*

Additional texts for this course are available online. Students may read texts online, thus saving the costs of printing; they may print out copies on their home computers; or they may read conventional printed texts, which are widely available in libraries and bookstores. The major authors for this course are: Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Denise Levertov, Sharon Olds, Linda Pastan, Sylvia Plath, Ezra Pound, Adrienne Rich, William Shakespeare (Sonnets), Cathy Song, Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams

Requirements

Participation (including attendance at class meetings and participation online activities) (approximately 20%)

Writing exercises (approximately 20%)

Quizzes (approximately 20%)

Portfolio / essay (approximately 20%)

Final exam (approximately 20%)

Participation

Regular and timely participation in discussions, both in-class and online, is necessary for success in this course.

Writing Exercises

Weekly writing exercises are submitted via the WebCT Discussions interface. These writing exercises are considered to be "poems in progress."

Quizzes

Online quizzes are available via the WebCT interface throughout the term. Quizzes are intended to pace students through the course's required readings and help develop key concepts. They are also part of the necessary preparation for the objective section of the final exam, as described below.

Portfolio / essay

One essay of approximately 900 words is due at the end of the term. Follow this link for more details about the essay assignment. In general, the essay is evaluated with regard to: 1. organization, 2. clarity, 3. correctness, 4. conciseness, and 5. creativity. The essay is submitted via the WebCT Assignments interface. Follow this link for a table of abbreviations used in evaluation of essays.

The portfolio is a collection of at least 5 poems completed during the term along with the essay. Students are encouraged to be as creative as possible in the construction of the portfolio.

Final Exam

The final exam consists of two sections. The first section is made up of 25 or more short answer or multiple-choice questions similar to those on the quizzes; this section is given via the WebCT quiz interface. The second section consists of one or more essay questions which will be distributed during the week prior to the exam.

Grading Scale

Where numeric grades are concerned the following scale will apply: A = 90 - 100 (A- = 93, A = 95 - 100); B = 80 - 89.9 (B- = 83, B = 85, B+ = 88); C = 70 - 79.9 (C- = 73, C = 75, C+ = 78); D = 60 - 69.9.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

All material submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must be written by the registered student. While students are strongly encouraged to consult sources outside the required reading of the course, they are also responsible for clearly stating the nature of their sources. Statements of "common knowledge" are generally exempt from this scholarly requirement.

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of someone else's ideas as your own. Plagiarism in this course will result in a grade of "0" for the assignment and possible failure for the course.

If the instructor suspects plagiarism, the burden of proof of the originality of the writing lies with the student. Evidence of originality would include copies of early drafts of the writing, research and interview notes, as well as the ability to discuss the themes of the writing with the instructor. Students should consider their instructor's vigilance in such matters a normal part of the academic process and should be prepared to present evidence of originality if requested.

Students are strongly advised to save files of early drafts of essays, along with outlines, research notes and other supporting documentation, as the instructor may at any time require that they be presented.

Course Overview

Week 1 -- The Image

Readings: "Images" (Poets Companion 85 - 93); Ezra Pound "In the Station of the Metro"; William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"; Cathy Song, "Magic Island"; Juliet Kono, "Siverswords"; Edward Hirsh, "How to Read These Poems"

Online Discussions

Week 2 -- Metaphor

Readings: "Simile and Metaphor" (Poets Companion 94 - 103); selections from the poetry of James Wright, commentary by Robert Haas

Online Discussions

Week 3 -- The Poetic Line

Readings: "The Music of the Line" (Poets Companion 104 - 114); selections from the poetry of Poetry of Emily Dickinson

Online Discussions

Quiz 1

Week 4 -- Voice

Readings: "Voice and Style" (Poets Companion 115 - 128); selected poems by William Butler Yeats, William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot, "The Wild Swans at Coole"

Online Discussions

Week 5 -- Poetry and Dream

Readings "Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments" (Poets Companion 129 - 137); selected poems by Guillaume Apollinaire, Michael Benedikt, Robert Desnos, Paul Eluard, Kenneth Koch, Federico Garcia Lorca, Arthur Rimbaud

Online discussions

Week 6 -- Formalism

Readings: "Meter, Rhyme, and Form" (Poets Companion 138 - 151); Shakespeare's Sonnets

Online discussions

Quiz 2

Week 7 -- Repetition and Music

Readings: "Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues" (Poets Companion 151 - 161); selected poems by Sylvia Plath
Film: *Sylvia*

Online discussions

Week 8 -- Some Forms

Readings: "More Repetition: Villanelle, Pantoum, Sestina" (Poets Companion 161 - 170); selected poems by Ezra Pound

Online discussions

Week 9 -- The Use of Grammar

Readings "A Grammatical Excursion" (Poets Companion 171 - 185); selected poems by Adrienne Rich

Online discussions
Quiz 3

Week 10 -- Revision

Readings: "The Energy of Revision" (Poets Companion 186 - 194); selected poems by William Stafford;
also Stafford's *You Must Revise Your Life*
Online discussions

Week 11 -- Family, Death and Grief

Readings "The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle" and "Death and Grief" (Poets Companion 30 - 45);
selected poems by Linda Pastan, Sharon Olds
Online discussions

Week 12 -- The Body

Readings: "Writing the Erotic" (Poets Companion 46 - 55); selected poems by Walt Whitman
Online discussions
Quiz 4

Week 13 -- Shadows

Readings: "The Shadow" (Poets Companion 56 - 63); selected poems by Denise Levertov
Online discussions
Portfolio (including Essay) Due

Week 14 -- Witness

Readings: "Witnessing" (Poets Companion 64 - 73); selected poems by Garrett Hongo and Cathy Song
Online discussions

Week 15 -- Ecopoetry

Read "Poetry of Place" (Poets Companion 74 - 84)
Online discussions
Final Exam